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BELOVED CALIFORNIA

G. W. BURTON

J. R. Scott

From the Author

Sept. 1915.

Beloved California

A Lyric of the Soul

SECOND THOUSAND

BY

G. W. BURTON

—

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY

A. B. DODGE

—

LOS ANGELES, 1914

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G. W. BURTON
as the "Eagle," in the Illustrated Weekly Magazine
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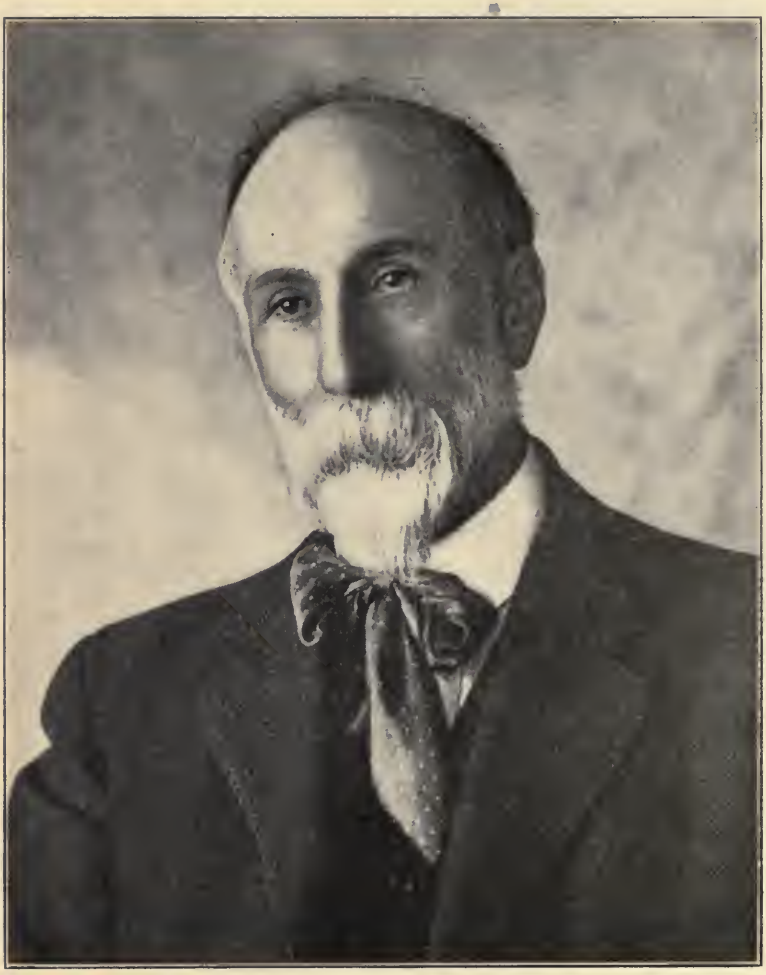

G. W. Burton

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EVERGREEN OAK—A NOOK IN A CALIFORNIA WOODLAND VALE

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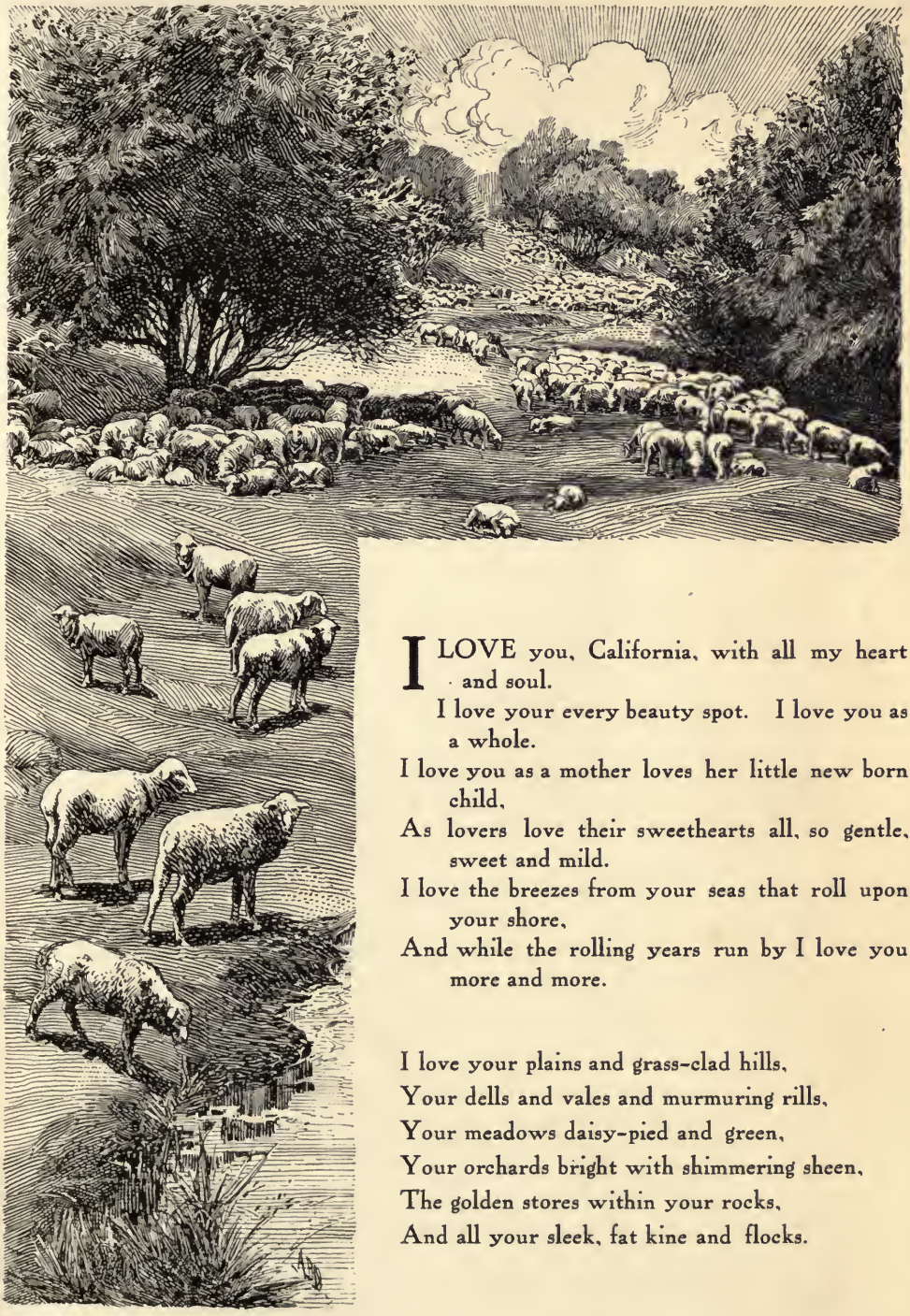
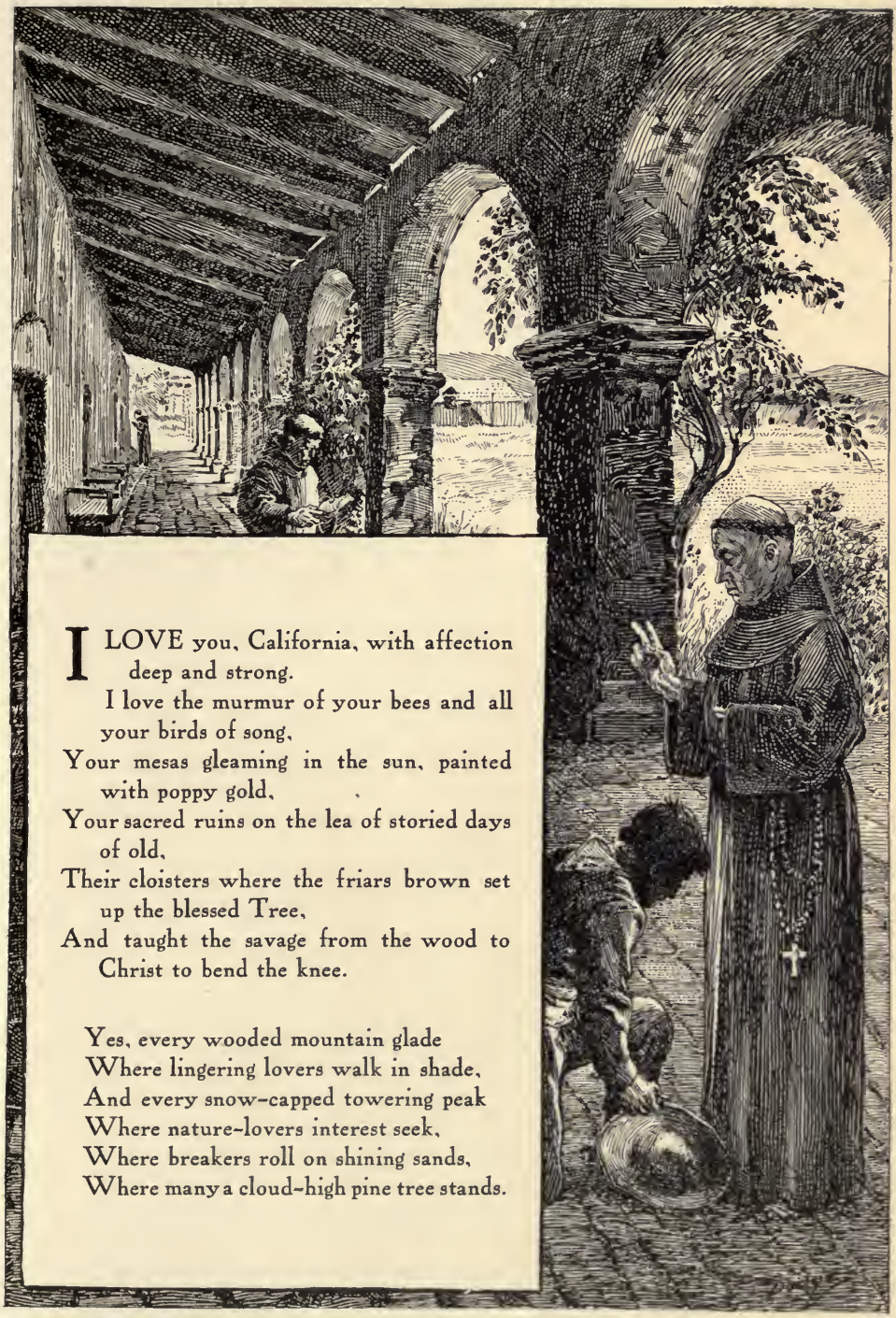


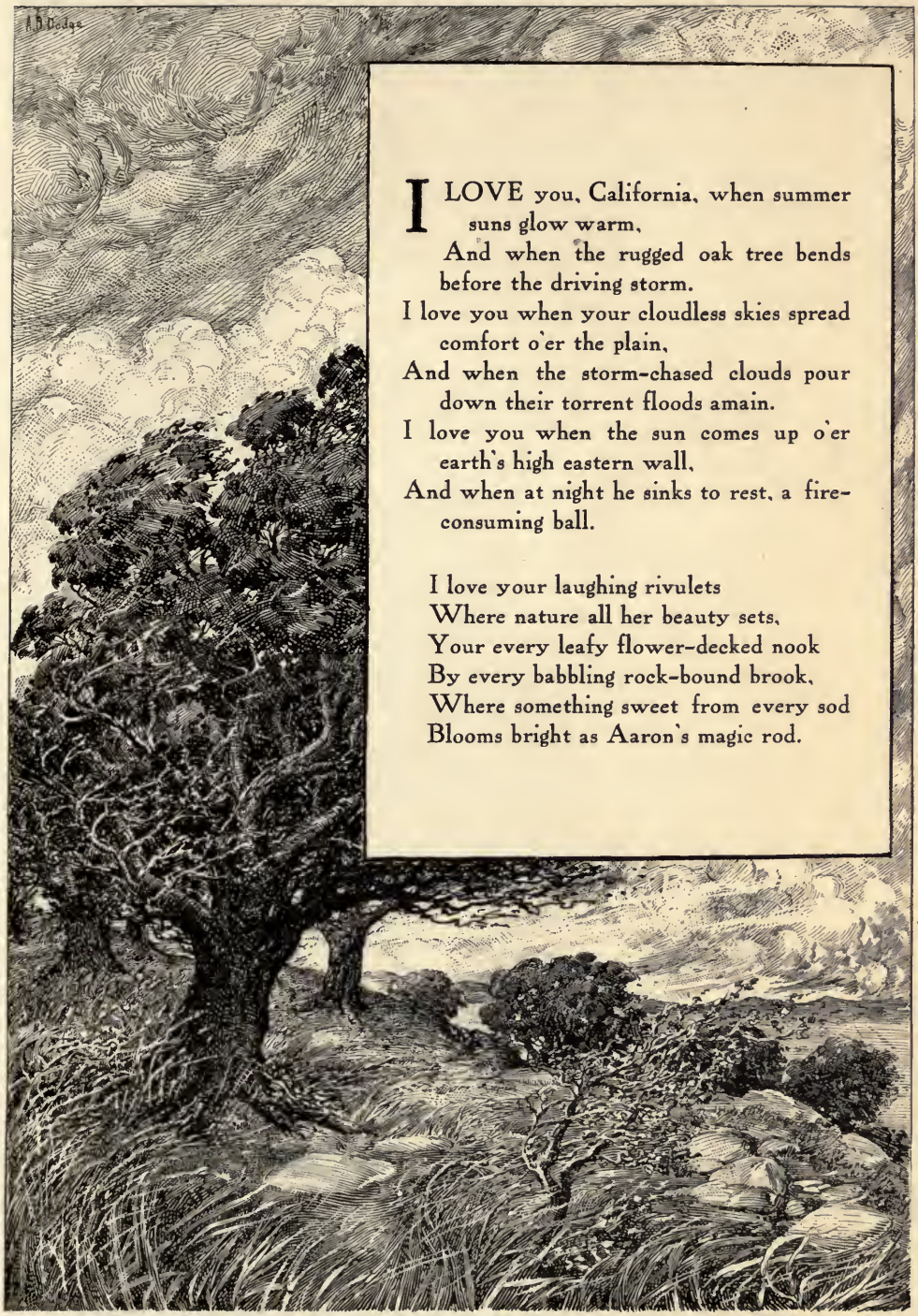
I LOVE you, California, with all my heart and soul.
I love your every beauty spot. I love you as a whole.
I love you as a mother loves her little new born child,
As lovers love their sweethearts all, so gentle, sweet and mild.
I love the breezes from your seas that roll upon your shore,
And while the rolling years run by I love you more and more.

I love your plains and grass-clad hills,
Your dells and vales and murmuring rills,
Your meadows daisy-pied and green,
Your orchards bright with shimmering sheen,
The golden stores within your rocks,
And all your sleek, fat kine and flocks.



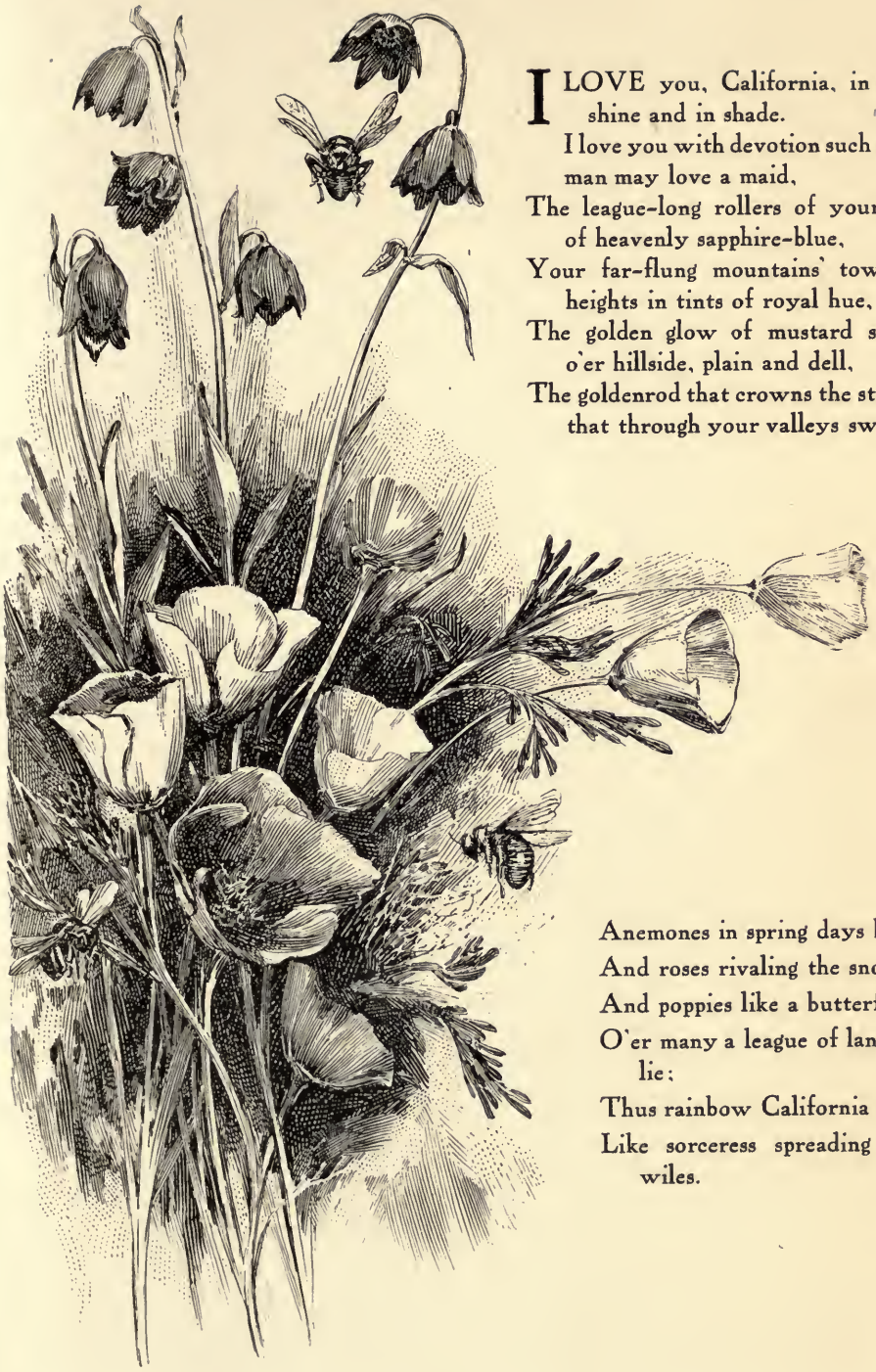
I LOVE you, California, with affection
deep and strong.
I love the murmur of your bees and all
your birds of song,
Your mesas gleaming in the sun, painted
with poppy gold,
Your sacred ruins on the lea of storied days
of old,
Their cloisters where the friars brown set
up the blessed Tree,
And taught the savage from the wood to
Christ to bend the knee.

Yes, every wooded mountain glade
Where lingering lovers walk in shade,
And every snow-capped towering peak
Where nature-lovers interest seek,
Where breakers roll on shining sands,
Where many a cloud-high pine tree stands.



I LOVE you, California, when summer
suns glow warm,
And when the rugged oak tree bends
before the driving storm.
I love you when your cloudless skies spread
comfort o'er the plain,
And when the storm-chased clouds pour
down their torrent floods amain.
I love you when the sun comes up o'er
earth's high eastern wall,
And when at night he sinks to rest, a fire-
consuming ball.

I love your laughing rivulets
Where nature all her beauty sets,
Your every leafy flower-decked nook
By every babbling rock-bound brook,
Where something sweet from every sod
Blooms bright as Aaron's magic rod.

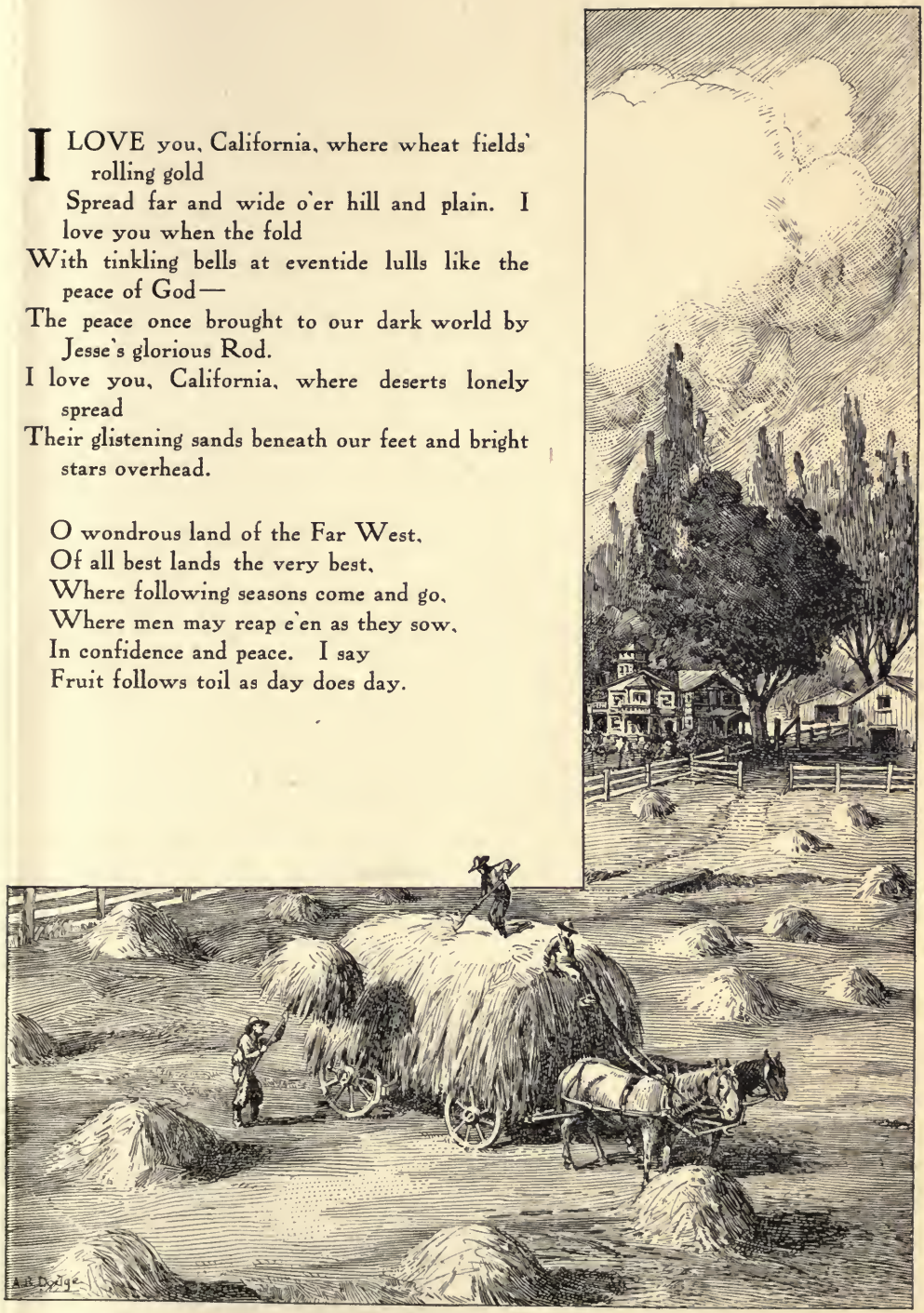


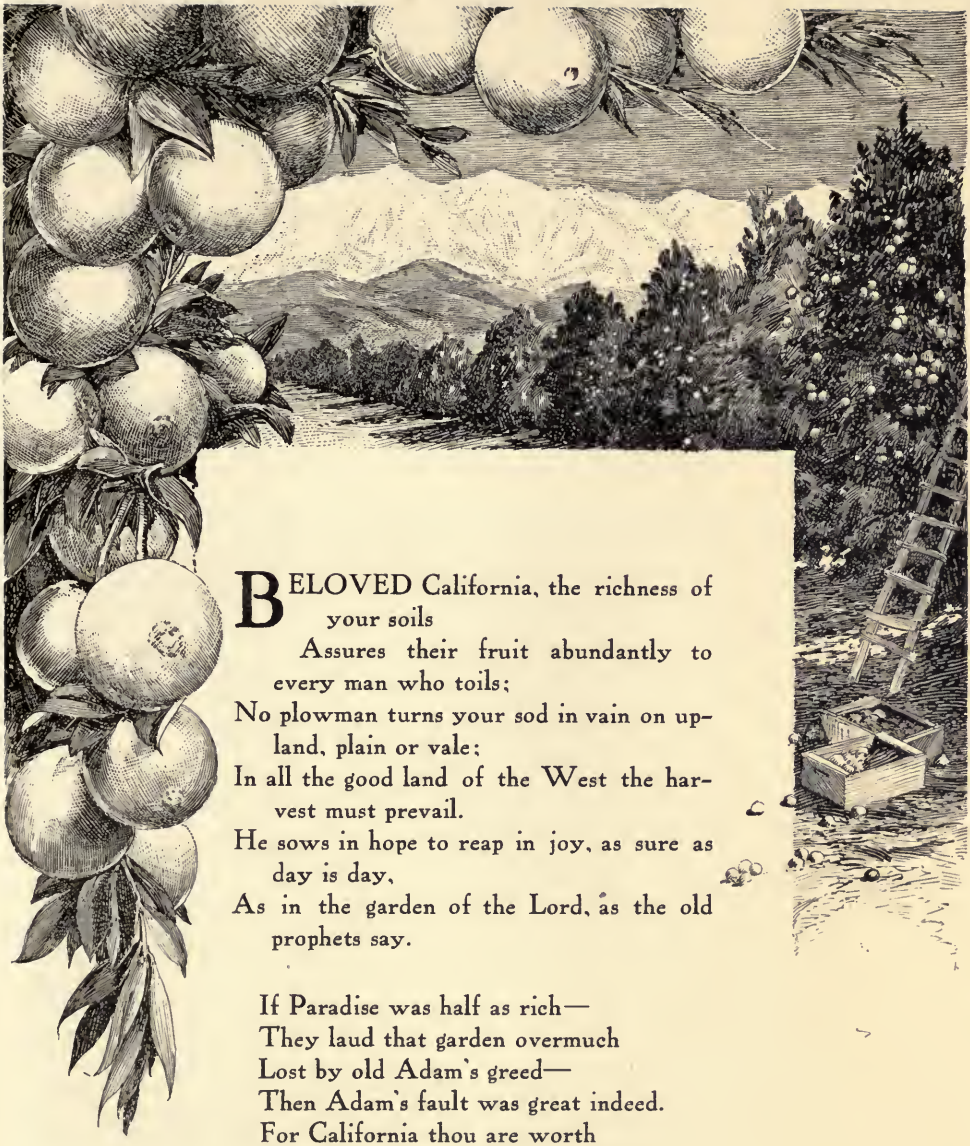
I LOVE you, California, in sunshine and in shade.
I love you with devotion such as man may love a maid,
The league-long rollers of your seas of heavenly sapphire-blue,
Your far-flung mountains' towering heights in tints of royal hue,
The golden glow of mustard spread o'er hillside, plain and dell,
The goldenrod that crowns the streams that through your valleys swell.

Anemones in spring days blow
And roses rivaling the snow,
And poppies like a butterfly
O'er many a league of landscape lie;
Thus rainbow California smiles
Like sorceress spreading magic wiles.

I LOVE you, California, where wheat fields' rolling gold
Spread far and wide o'er hill and plain. I love you when the fold
With tinkling bells at eventide lulls like the peace of God—
The peace once brought to our dark world by Jesse's glorious Rod.
I love you, California, where deserts lonely spread
Their glistening sands beneath our feet and bright stars overhead.

O wondrous land of the Far West,
Of all best lands the very best,
Where following seasons come and go,
Where men may reap e'en as they sow,
In confidence and peace. I say
Fruit follows toil as day does day.

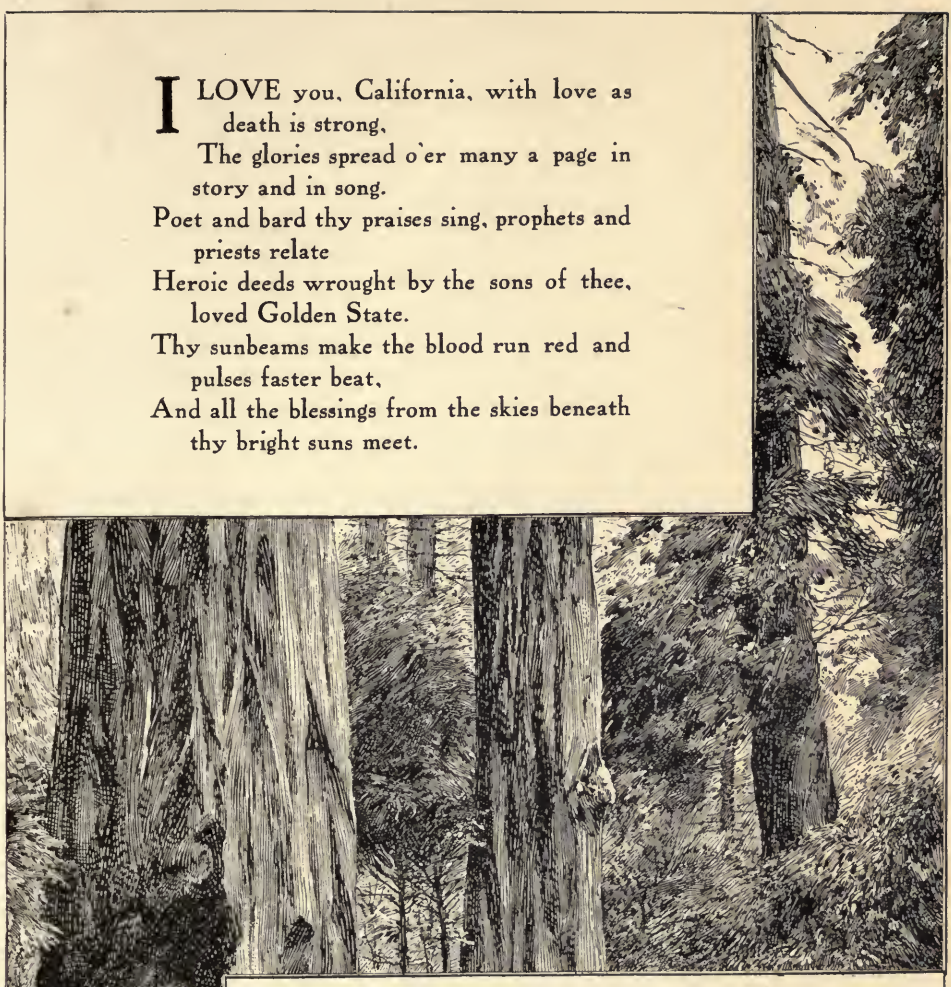




BELOVED California, the richness of your soils
Assures their fruit abundantly to every man who toils;
No plowman turns your sod in vain on upland, plain or vale;
In all the good land of the West the harvest must prevail.
He sows in hope to reap in joy, as sure as day is day,
As in the garden of the Lord, as the old prophets say.

If Paradise was half as rich—
They laud that garden overmuch
Lost by old Adam's greed—
Then Adam's fault was great indeed.
For California thou are worth
To me more than all else of earth.

I LOVE you, California, with love as death is strong,
The glories spread o'er many a page in story and in song.
Poet and bard thy praises sing, prophets and priests relate
Heroic deeds wrought by the sons of thee, loved Golden State.
Thy sunbeams make the blood run red and pulses faster beat,
And all the blessings from the skies beneath thy bright suns meet.



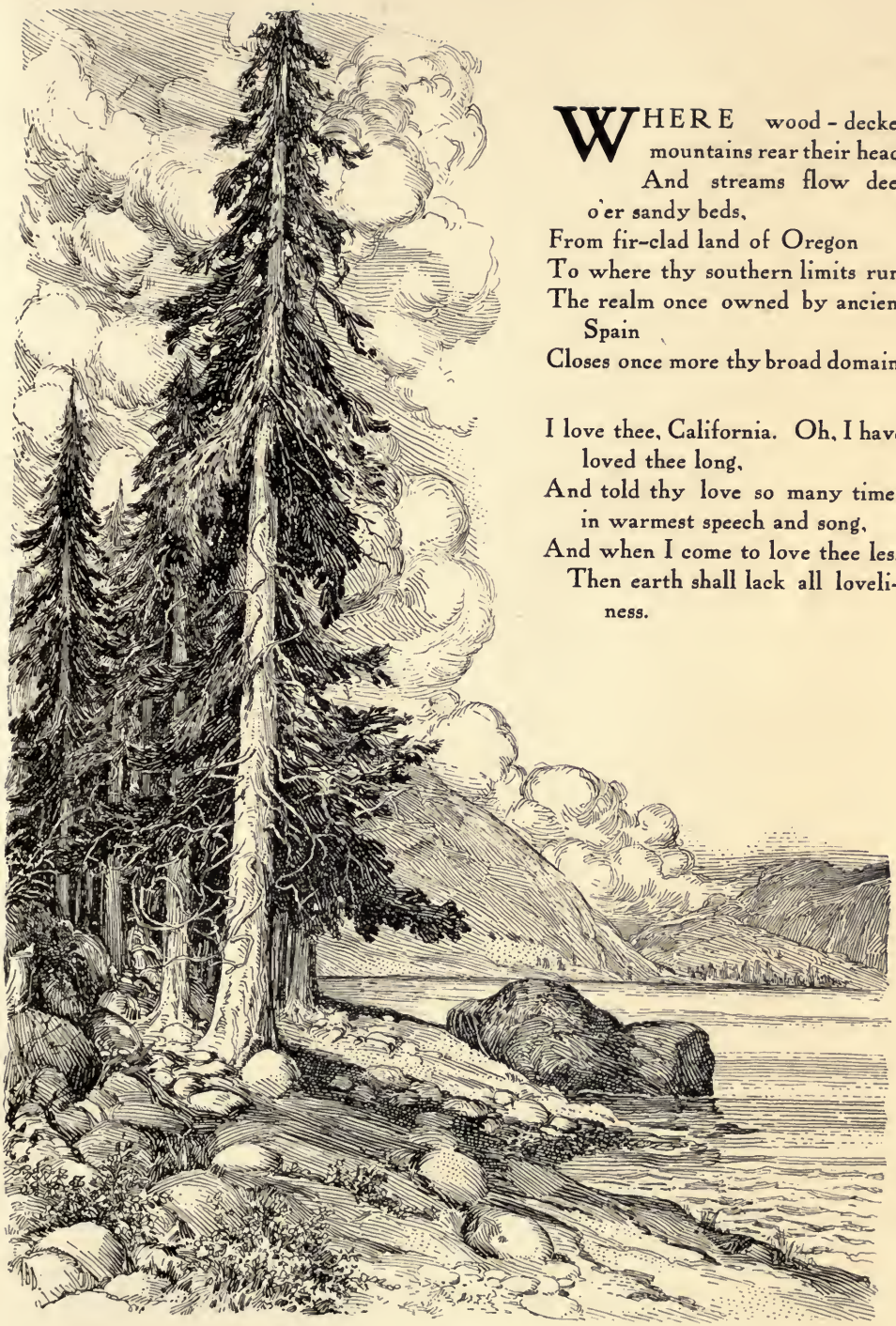
Round Zion goodly hills may stand,
And in that ancient promised land
The milk and honey flowed apace
For God's elected favored race;
But Golden State, God cast thy lot
In full as rich and happy a spot.

UNTO thy hills I lift my eyes, my well-beloved State.
I love thee from thy snow-capped peaks unto thy Golden Gate,
Thy rills and purling brooks are dear unto my mind and heart,
That from my soul the love of thee can never more depart;
While memory rules this mind of mine and reason holds its sway,
I'll tell thy story, sing thy praise, in bypath and highway.

But oh, how weak is all the praise
Phrased in the most enchanting ways
To tell the glories that are thine;
For all thy beauties far outshine
The warmest words of human tongue
By poet, bard or minstrel sung.

THE nebulous streams of light that flow
across the night-veiled, star-
gemmed sky,
Are less resplendent than the dyes that on
thy fair face lie.
The sun bends low at morn and eve to kiss
that radiant face,
And wonders at the matchless charms which
wrap thee with such grace.
The winds that sweep thy cloudless skies
caress thy tresses bright,
And all thy seas roll at thy feet to wonder
at the sight.

Clothed in such wondrous loveliness
Ah, who could ever love thee less?
I love thee from thy Silver Gate
To where grand Shasta sits in state,
By all thy rivers, brooks and rills,
By all thy flower-strewn plains and hills,



WHERE wood-decked
mountains rear their heads
And streams flow deep
o'er sandy beds,
From fir-clad land of Oregon
To where thy southern limits run,
The realm once owned by ancient
Spain
Closes once more thy broad domain.

I love thee, California. Oh, I have
loved thee long,
And told thy love so many times
in warmest speech and song,
And when I come to love thee less
Then earth shall lack all loveli-
ness.

HOW IT CAME TO PASS

Sunlight mornings, starlit evenings, so they pass away.
Man is ever weary, weary waiting for the May.

Excepting in California, where from January to June nearly every day is May-like, and then nearly every day to January again is June-like.

The few little verses that precede this post-face were written one beautiful day in January, 1914, when the air was as warm as a May day, the plains as green as Ireland in June, and all the wild flowers struggling to express themselves in a thousand colors all over upland and plain, in dell and mountain canyon throughout all California. The writer's being was thrilled full with the sunlight and his memory keen with all that he owed to his beloved California as he drew near the end of half a century of peaceful successful life in a region the richest and most beautiful, under skies the brightest and amid airs the balmiest in the wide, wide world.

As he writes these words, May is drawing to a close, and on the following week when the fourth of June comes it will be exactly forty-eight years since he packed up his small belongings by the shores of Lake Michigan in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to start on his pilgrimage for California, an exceedingly sick man of twenty-six years, almost without hope in the world. Do you blame him, sympathetic reader, for loving California, where now at the age of almost seventy-five he is still doing a full day's work every day in the week, in better health than he had half a century before, young as he was? And do you blame him for wanting to tell what California's balmy climate has done for his health and what her opportunities have done to make him independent of the world in his old age?

That is his only (not excuse but) good reason for desiring to spread his admiration of California before the eyes of as many readers as he can reach, especially those in poor health threatened with worse, and above all before the eyes of young people afflicted with any kind of disease, threatened with premature death and without hope in the world, that they may know that there is here a "land of pure delight" where hope springs eternal even in the breasts of invalids, that health may be recovered with a useful life and success to be achieved to those who will only hear the message and come in time.

With these aspirations in mind, the author went before a gathering of the Realty Board, a body of men larger in numbers and more successful in their calling than could be found anywhere else in any similar city in the world, and read his simple tribute to the State that did so much for him, and they advised the publication of the verses with the story he told them of its writing. The story follows:

There is gathered here a large number of business men of the city whom I am very proud to have greet me as a friend and to profess themselves my friends. Friendship, in my opinion, is the greatest asset in life a man can have outside of his own personality.

These reminiscences, being personal and touching the speaker, they would require the personal pronoun in the first person, a big "I," six feet two tall, broad-shouldered, bold-faced, with a very small dot at the top. Therefore, to avoid the use of this personal pronoun, a thing so disagreeable to a modest man, it would be well to provide a substitute for the big "I." Let the speaker, therefore, refer to himself as "the invalid," for his invalidism is what brought him to California.

Nearly fifty years ago the invalid was a teacher in a Wisconsin college, and after an attack of typhoid fever, from being an all-around college athlete he was left a physical wreck. A consultation was held on his case by three doctors who sat over him like three crows watching the movements of a dying mule, and after auscultating

his lungs, punching his ribs, feeling his pulse and inspecting his tongue, they came to the conclusion expressed about like this: "Get out of here. You can't live two more years in Wisconsin, probably not one. Go to California, and we will promise you an extension of your life possibly six years." The invalid promised to go if he could beg or borrow $300 to take him, but remarked that he would not die in six years nor in twenty-six.

His case was tragic in its sadness. With the prospect of death unless he went to California, without money enough to reach New York, he betook himself to the music-room and there told the decision to a lady who was teaching music, French and Italian in the college. She said: "I will lend you the money." But the invalid remarked: "Perhaps you'll never get it back. Perhaps I may forget you and the money." And the lady replied: "The loss of your friendship would be great, that of the money little." So the invalid said to the lady, "Will you go with me?"

On the fourth day of June, 1866, the two were married, and as the invalid said: "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," a twinkle glistened in his eye at the thought of the borrowed money to take him to California.

In due time the ships and the Panama Railroad landed the invalid and the lady in the Golden State. He taught school all the way from Los Angeles to Portland for a period of more than ten years. The audience is a gathering of real estate people, and it may interest them to know that one of his first acts was to save his salary and secure a piece of California real estate. This was ten acres of land at Redwood City, in the county of San Mateo, for which he paid $1000. A year later he disposed of this and went to Fair Oaks, three miles farther south, where he purchased ten acres of beautiful park-like land, studded with magnificent oaks, for $1750.

The invalid and the lady had eastern friends in the city of Los Angeles, and these wrote, holding out glowing prospects for a private school of high grade here in this city. The invalid could not forget in a thousand years this first visit to Southern California. After landing at Timm's Point, mounting one of John M. Griffith's stage coaches, with old John Reynolds holding the ribbons, the race with the Banning stage from Wilmington began, and with the four horses in the sixteen-mile race it was "ventre a terre" every rod of the road. Between San Pedro and about Washington and San Pedro street corner in Los Angeles the plains that March day were covered with a luxuriant growth of grass a couple of feet high, and the grass was covered by thousands and tens of thousands of wild geese. They would scarcely move out of the way of the horses' feet, and when the invalid got off his box by the driver and armed himself with a peckful of clods one of these cast into the flock of geese would cause a fluttering of wings, and when the birds soared over the stage they made an eclipse of the sun.

Now, to the real estate reminiscences. The invalid in 1869 bought from Dr. William Hammell, the excellent father of the very excellent Sheriff of Los Angeles county today, a regular city lot 120 feet on Spring street by 165 on Fifth, where the old buildings are now being cleared off to erect a home for the Citizens' Bank. The property was recently secured at an investment of $1,000,000, and the building is to cost another million. Oh, friends, that is not the only time the invalid just missed being a millionaire.

His school prospered, and one evening in his study he was visited by a committee of three: the late John M. Griffith, the late John G. Nichols and the late Vincent Hoover. Griffith acted as spokesman. He presented the invalid with a deed, made and executed in due form, conveying to him for a "thank you," the title to a forty-acre donation lot in the city of Los Angeles. This lay along what is now Figueroa street, from about Fifth to Eighth, and stretching away back over the hills to Lucas or Witmer street. The gift implied that the invalid would remain in Los Angeles for ten years and conduct a private school for boys and girls. He thanked the committee, but remarked that he would not pledge himself to stay in the city ten years if they gave him the whole country.

There was the second time the invalid missed ranking as a millionaire. The price of that forty acres was $1600. John G. Nichols was the seller, and in view of the purposes for which the donation was being made be abated the price by $200. On the advice of the invalid the property was conveyed to trustees, to be used for educational purposes. The further fate of the property does not concern us at this time. It is values we are considering.

The population of Los Angeles at that time was about 5000. Probably 3000 of these were what we call native Californians or Mexicans, 1000 probably represented various nationalities of Europe, and about 1000 Americans. As the speaker remarked last night at a gathering of church people, there were more persons in St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral on Sunday morning than the entire American population of Los Angeles at the date referred to.

With a population of 500,000 the corner of Spring and Fifth streets purchased by the invalid for $5000, is now worth a million, and the forty-acre donation lot just referred to is worth millions. The corner of Seventh and Figueroa, now a part of the Foy estate, is worth more for one foot of frontage than the whole forty acres cost when offered to the invalid.

Well, California suns and breezes from limitless seas uncontaminated as the breath of heaven, did wonders for the invalid, and by the time he had been in this State the period allotted to him for a lifetime he had become pretty sound in lung and limb. But Southern California was struck with the longest period of dry weather ever known before or since. Three seasons passed with so little rain that the plains lay covered with dead animals perishing from lack of food and water. The poor cattle, forced to live on cactus, had tongues like a pin-cushion, full of the last spines of the cactus that could stick into them. When they waded into a cienaga to get a drink they were too weak to get out. The invalid had made money, and with a partner had purchased 6000 to 7000 acres of the Puente Hills, mortgaging their flock of sheep as security for the land. The flock survived a second dry winter, but succumbed the third, sweeping away all the economies of the invalid—the land reverting to the original owner. He was offered a place in a school in Portland, Or., and was obliged to leave the lady behind and borrow money again to make his journey. He fell on a soft spot up in Oregon, and soon sent for the lady to join him, and there they invested again in Pacific Coast realty, and prospered in that.

Eighteen hundred and eighty saw the invalid back in Los Angeles county. Ah, what a magnetic attraction there is about this land of the heart's desire, so beautiful, so salubrious! None who has even fallen under the spell of that charm has been able to go away and stay away otherwise than through compelling necessities.

This time the invalid took a big jump in Los Angeles real estate. With a partner, he purchased the Howard ranch at San Gabriel, 640 acres. It had a good house on it, and other improvements, ten acres of bearing vines, several acres of oranges in full bearing, ditto of walnuts, and a small orchard of deciduous fruits. The land cost $25,000, or about $40 an acre. Before purchasing it the invalid had visited at the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco the late J. DeBarth Shorb, who offered him any amount of land well stocked with water, at $20 an acre, a dollar down and a dollar a year until paid out. The interest was 12 per cent. per annum on the deferred payments. The Shorb tract, at this time, includes the site of South Pasadena, and stretches down to Shorb and Ramona Acres. The Howard ranch is worth from $1000 an acre to $1000 a building lot today. This is another time the invalid missed being a millionaire. For about three years after the purchase of the Howard ranch the invalid parted with his interest in it, which had cost about $10,000, for $15,000 cash and mortgage, the mortgage bearing 12 per cent. interest.

With the cash in his pocket and a little more savings, the invalid was in Los Angeles one day, and passing the office of A. E. Pomeroy, with us here this morning, he saw on his board an advertisement of fifty acres at Vernon for $6500. The real estate man took the invalid in his buggy down Alameda street below Washington, where an inspection of the property was made, and a bargain struck for its purchase.

There was a good house on the property, and with it went a team of horses, a wagon and a full outfit of agricultural implements. Before the deed passed, these accessories were sold for $600, and the property rented to a Chinese gardener for $800 a year. Pretty good interest on an investment of $6000. And upon the first day of every month the Chinaman came into the invalid's office and counted out in nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars and dollars his month's rent. Today the property is worth from $100 a foot to $10,000 a lot. And once more the invalid missed being a millionaire.

He traded the property off for the corner of Franklin and New High streets, where the Title Insurance and Trust Company put up its first building. This piece was traded for 270 acres in the San Gabriel Valley, which was sold a short time after for $27,500. In three years an investment of $6000 had grown to $27,500, and in the four years the invalid had been back in Los Angeles his $10,000 had grown to $40,000. For he had purchased on Bunker Hill, near Second street, from the late William D. Stephens, brother of former Judge Albert M., a house and lot for $1500, the house having cost $1800 to build. Lots all around there were worth $300 apiece, and the lady, who had very good judgment, urged the invalid to buy some of them. Instead of taking her advice, he followed his own superior wisdom, and went around the country and bought up barley at a dollar a sack, which he warehoused for a year, paid insurance on it, and then sold it for 60 cents.

The lots on Bunker Hill avenue referred to just above are now, at the end of thirty years, worth at least $12,000. Population is the foundation of realty values, friends, but the value of real property increases more than in the ratio of the increase of population. When the invalid bought that property on Bunker Hill avenue, house and lot for $300 less than the house had cost, the population of Los Angeles was about 11,000.

The next time the invalid missed being a millionaire was when J. R. Scott, an attorney of this city, urged him to purchase an estate which had come into his hands to settle. It was that of a worthy German citizen, a respected friend of the invalid, who had died, and the widow wished to sell the ranch. It has escaped the memory of the speaker what the acreage was, or the price exactly, but the ranch of that day covered the area of the city of Los Angeles, running from about the corner of Spring and Seventh streets along Seventh street to somewhere near Grand avenue, and extending southward beyond Pico, possibly to Washington street. The price could not have been more than $6000, and was probably less. Remember that was less than thirty years ago, and today the speaker is informed that the corner of Broadway and Seventh, across from Bullock's, is held at $15,000 a front foot, or more for a single foot frontage twice over than the whole tract could have been had for a short generation ago.

Here was perhaps the last opportunity that came right into the hands of the invalid to be a millionaire, and he let it slip out. Friends of his have stayed with the real estate business and prospered marvelously. Many of them are here in this room at this moment, and hundreds of them belong to the Realty Board. It is simply a question of temperament, friends. When one of you puts through a deal and banks a check for $1000 for his commission, he thinks he has done something, and he has. When one of you organizes a syndicate and carries through a deal that involves a million or so he thinks he has done something very great, and he does not flatter himself.

You see, it's different with different people. There is our friend, your excellent secretary, Philip Wilson, once an associate of the invalid in the newspaper profession, and a pen artist of no small degree. There you get the point of view of the invalid. He has flattered himself with the idea that he is somewhat of a pen artist, and the community, including hundreds of members of the Realty Board, have encouraged him to hug "this flattering unction to his soul." When one of you meets him and congratulates him on the beauty of an article reeled off at the end of his pencil or the end of his tongue to a typewriter, he thinks he feels as you feel when you put through a big real estate deal.

The other day, thinking of his half-century of life in California and what its balmy climate had done for his health, and of all the enjoyments he has had out of its beautiful scenery of mountain and mesa, plain and seashore, an inspiration struck his soul, and before dinner time he had reeled off what he calls "A Lyric of the Soul." The invalid begs your attention while he reads this appreciation of the beloved State which has prolonged his life so marvelously.

At the end of the reading the speaker said: "And now the worst is yet to come." Many of you will remember a book the invalid published some years ago containing selections from his newspaper writings. The artist seeks fame, not fortune. You are more intent on fortune than on fame. So you made a generous division of your fortune to enable your friend to win fame. He was in San Francisco and went into the bank of I. W. Hellman to solicit a subscription to his work. Upon learning the price of it the banker smiled and said: "You and I have known each other a long time. I do not flatter you in saying that in my opinion your writings have attracted more population, capital, enterprise and industry to Southern California than those of any other newspaper writer who has ever penned a word in praise of that section. You have lived on a salary and remained poor while you have made many rich. Now the Bank of Nevada will subscribe the price of twenty of your books, the Union Trust Company will do the same, and the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank of Los Angeles as many more, and I will give for the three lots, $150."

The invalid has had many gratifications in his long life, but none that surpasses the way in which the business men of this city gratify his ambition to win fame by contributing so liberally of their fortunes. It's probably a foolish feeling, but to this day when somebody stops the invalid on the street and tells him for the tenth or the twentieth time that he is still enjoying reading his book, he feels as if he had won a little measure of fame, and his heart swells very full with a very foolish pride.

Now he is told that the lyric which he has just read is not bad, and he is still athirst for fame, and asks you to again share your fortune with him in publishing this effusion in verse. He proposes to illustrate it superbly, and all he wants is to get it distributed widely to assuage his own thirst for fame and to attract more people to the State for their own sakes and for yours. There are many invalids in the United States who might be benefited by the California climate as your speaker has been, and there are invalids being born and made every day in the year. This little lyric of the soul will be put upon the market at an exceedingly small price, and if distributed broadcast will gratify the invalid's thirst for fame and help you to swell your fortunes. Still my thirst for fame is very great, and I have no misgiving as to what your response will be to assuage it.

[The first thousand sold before they were out of the printer's hands, and now this second edition is selling as rapidly for holiday presents.]

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